



## FINAL RECOMMENDATION OF THE SOUTHEAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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Project Number: 3012217 and 3012417

Address: 2615 25th Avenue S & 2715 25th Avenue S

Applicant: Trenton Associates McClellan LLC

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, December 13, 2011

Board Members Present: Sam Cameron (Acting Chair)  
Amoreena Miller  
Stephen Yamada-Heidner

Board Members Absent: Tony Case  
Brett Conway  
  
Bo Zhang

DPD Staff Present: Michael Dorcy

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### SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: SF 5000  
(SM/R 65' Rezone to be proposed)

Nearby Zones: North: NC3-65  
South: LR2  
East: NC3P-65  
West: SF 5000

Lot Area: 25,867 & 42,000 square feet



Current Development: Five single family residences; one minor communications utility (not a part of development site)

Access: From 25th Avenue S. via S. McClellan Street

Surrounding Development: Commercial official, retail; residential (single family)

ECAs: Steep slopes to west

Neighborhood Character: Transitional/ mixed development to transit-oriented development because of proximity to Sound Transit Mt. Baker Light Rail station at S. McClellan Street

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Approximately 300 residential units (310,000 gross square feet) in two buildings of 6-7 stories, with parking for 300 vehicles. The project will include indoor and outdoor amenity spaces. Parking access for each building will be from S. Lander Street, which separates the two proposed structures and is currently unimproved. The project will further improve 25th Avenue S., a street one block in length at this point which leads into S. McClellan Street. The project contemplates additional pedestrian opportunities, such as access to the Cheasty Greenbelt which abuts the project to the west.

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## **DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

After brief introductions by members of the Board and the Planner, Michael Willis of the development team described three primary goals of the proposed development in the north Rainier neighborhood, which included exploiting the proximity to the light rail station. The development would be the first in the Mt. Baker Station transit overlay district (TOD) and would set the direction for increased density in the area while providing for market rate housing. A second goal was the beginning of an effort to transform the surrounding community, currently dominated by industrial and commercial uses, many at a large scale, into a better balance of multifamily residential uses. Nestled as it would be up against the Cheasty Greenbelt, the project would have as a third goal one of providing a clear link to this intra-urban amenity. The project would provide a “softer, pastoral edge,” connecting directly to a public forty acre natural area owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation.

In making their presentation, the design team focused on four specific areas or “topics” highlighted by the Design Review Board at the Early Design Guidance meeting as essential to

success of the project. The first related to concerns expressed by Board members that the secondary building entry toward the southeast corner of the southern building, while not competing with the main entry, ought nevertheless to present itself as an entry since in all likelihood it would provide the main passage for residents walking to and from the light rail station. In response to the Board's directives the entry had been given a canopy and a more noticeable stairway.

Since both vehicles and pedestrians would be navigating S. Lander Street as the entries and exits for each building, the Board had asked for a fuller presentation regarding the "choreography" of pedestrian and vehicular movements with an eye towards both safety and comfort. This second theme was explored through a series of plans and perspectives depicting pedestrian and vehicular domains with various landscaping details defining walkways and driveways.

A third topic or theme was a response to the Board's guidance that this project should set a benchmark for future transit oriented development in the area, especially in the selection and detailing of architectural materials. A selection of materials and a palette of colors was presented to the Board, a selection intended to indicate a consistency of architectural concept between the two separate structures.

A final topic was that broached in response to the Board's earlier call for a more apparent integration of the various open spaces proposed as part of the project—S. Lander Street and the rear courtyard, especially, since they touched upon the greenbelt itself.

### Departures

The applicants indicated they were requesting no departures from the development standards of the targeted rezone, Seattle Mixed (SM).

### Public Comment

Eight members of the public attached their names to the sign-in sheet. Among the comments addressed to the Board were the following:

- Approved the sidewalk shown ascending S. McClellan St.; appreciated the way the massing of the development was broken up, but cautioned it might look like a solid wall from a distance;
- Liked the proposed colors, the abundance of outdoor space, encouraged deciduous trees with some height; thought the project succeeded in setting the bar for future development in the area;
- Suggested wide sidewalks.

## Board Deliberations

The Board commented favorably on how the two structures complemented each other, achieved an attractive urban form while creating a lively pedestrian environment enhanced by substantial landscaping. Overall the proposal more than adequately had complied with Design Review Guidelines chosen by the Board as of highest priority for the success of the project. For instance, at the Early Design Guidance meeting the Board had chose Guideline A-3 (“Entrances visible from the street”) as a guideline of particular applicability to the project. Their thinking had focused on the secondary entry that would be used by residents since it was closest for residents accessing and leaving the building on foot. Guideline A-10 was equally of importance since the building sat upon a corner lot and the intersection of 25<sup>th</sup> Av S. and S. McClellan St. was of special importance, even though the main entrances to each of the structures was further north at the junction of S. Lander St. and 25<sup>th</sup> Av. S. After much discussion the Board agreed that the applicants should tone down the residential entry nearest the corner so as not to make it detract from the primary entrances at S. Lander St.

## **DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES**

Since the proposal is premised on a contract rezone and particulars of the rezone had not been determined at the time of the EDG meeting, no particular departures from development standards were indicated at the time of the EDG meeting. The applicants indicated that the design as presented at the Recommendation meeting would require no departures from the intended SM/R 65' zoning designation being sought through the rezone process.

## **BOARD DIRECTION**

**At the conclusion of the Recommendation meeting, the Board unanimously recommended approval of the project as presented. It was understood by both the Board and the applicant that the project, together with proposed improvements to the public right-of-way, would provide the contractual basis of the contract rezone.**

In making this recommendation the Board noted that the amount of parking proposed for the project would seem to be out of step with the concept and intentions of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), and the Board wished to go on the record as being in favor of a less dense parking solution than that which had been shown.

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